

Financial Strategies for Monroe County

1. Maintain Stable Tax Rate

Aggressive efforts to reduce costs and enhance revenues from outside the County Tax Base will be continued, enabling the County to maintain the property tax rate at 2004 levels and provide quality services to its residents.

To this end, Monroe County will:

Pursue cost-saving and revenue-enhancing measures identified by the County Executive's Budget Advisory Team and others;

Pursue Federal, State, and other funding and financing strategies that reduce the need for County taxpayer funding;

Pursue legislative reforms at all levels of government that facilitate the County's ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

Collaboration with other governments in and outside of Monroe County, as well as with local business and educational institutions, is critical to the success of these efforts.

2. Initiate Multi-Year Budget Forecasting

Starting with the 2005 Monroe County Budget, an annual budget plus a two-year budget forecast will be prepared. This will complement long-range planning efforts, including the annual update of the six-year County Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

3. Rebuild County Reserves

A Tax Stabilization Fund will be created and when fully funded will amount to 7.5% of the average annual sales and property taxes accruing to Monroe County (approximately \$30 million). It will be funded through annual budget appropriations commensurate with available resources, in no case exceeding the amount of positive fund balance available in the General Fund. Any or all of this Fund may be applied for General Fund purposes during the annual budget process to stabilize taxes for the same fiscal year, and restored to the target fund level in subsequent budget years as resources permit.

4. Continue Conservative Cash and Debt Management Practices

The cash management system will be maintained to minimize short-term borrowing, maximize investment earnings, and ensure adequate safety of principal.

Debt will only be issued to finance capital projects included in the County's Capital Improvement Program where other funding sources are not available. Repayment of the debt will be structured in the most efficient manner to limit the impact on the taxpayer, and will take payment of existing debt obligations into consideration as well as the total projected operating costs of the County. Sound debt management practices will be employed along with compliance with County and State laws and regulations.

5. Maintain Appropriate Internal Controls

The system of internal controls will be maintained and monitored for enhancement opportunities to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and prudent stewardship of public funds. All employees will be responsible and accountable for the safekeeping of public assets, and a professional internal audit function will be maintained to monitor the system of controls.

6. Enhance Economic Development Efforts

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Monroe County Economic Development Strategy Team, economic development efforts will be fully coordinated and aggressively advanced in order to strengthen the underlying economic fundamentals of Monroe County. These efforts will contribute to Monroe County's ability to retain and attract business, labor and residents, maintain a stable tax rate, and provide quality services to its residents.

7. Track Performance Towards Goals

Performance measures and targets will be established to measure, manage and promote attainment of Monroe County's financial goals.

MONROE COUNTY PROCUREMENT POLICY

1. **Background**

This policy has been developed to ensure that Monroe County is in compliance with New York State General Municipal Law concerning the procurement of goods and services as defined herein.

In accordance with New York State General Municipal Law, all purchase contracts involving expenditures of more than \$10,000 and all contracts for public works involving expenditures of more than \$20,000 must be publicly bid. This policy prescribes the manner in which expenditures for purchase contracts and public works contracts not subject to public bidding requirements are awarded, as well as contracts for professional services, which are also not subject to public bidding requirements. This policy supercedes any policy previously issued and approved.

2. **Guidelines for Securing Competitive Quotations for Purchase and Publics Works Contracts**

This section pertains to all purchase and public works contracts less than the public bidding limits of \$10,000 and \$20,000 respectively. All County employees involved in the procurement process shall follow this policy.

All purchases of \$25 and less may be made directly with petty cash, subject to the Petty Cash guidelines established by the Monroe County Controller.

Purchases of items and/or services above twenty-five dollars (\$25) up to and including two hundred dollars (\$200) may be made at the discretion of the various departments. A cost quote(s) shall be obtained before any purchase. This policy recognizes that the benefits of cost savings from competition can be quickly outweighed by the costs inherent in seeking multiple quotations.

For all purchase and public works contracts in excess of \$200 and below the public bidding limits, the County will seek to secure at least three (3) competitive quotes, and shall make an award based on the lowest responsive and responsible quote. Any deviation from this policy shall have written justification from the Purchasing Manager and shall be included in the official file.

3. **When Competitive Bidding May Not Apply**

In accordance with General Municipal Law, there are several instances in which Public Bidding is not required. These instances include:

- purchases through New York State contracts
- purchases made by Monroe Community Hospital (MCH) pursuant to Public Health Law
- items to be purchased from a "sole source"
- items procured through a "true lease"
- surplus supplies, materials or equipment purchased from another governmental or public benefit entity
- supplies, materials or equipment purchased from state correctional institutions or from qualified charitable not-for-profit agencies for the blind or disabled
- purchase or public work is required in an emergency, subject to the requirements of the emergency purchase order procedures.
- the County Legislature approves the standardization of an item
- energy performance contracts
- professional services contracts

4. **Professional Services**

This section pertains to professional services, which are not subject to public bidding requirements, and which are subject to approval by the Monroe County Legislature and/or the County Executive. Professional Services are services which require special or technical skill, training or expertise which does not readily lend itself to competitive bidding. General guidelines for determining whether a procurement is a professional service are as follows:

- a) Whether the services are subject to State licensing or testing requirements;
- b) Whether substantial formal education or training is a necessary prerequisite to the performance of the services;
- c) Whether the services require a relationship of personal trust and confidence between the contractor and municipal officials.

For all professional service agreements less than \$5,000, a Request for Proposal ("RFP") is not required but may be used when practical.

For all professional service agreements above \$5,000 and less than \$25,000, an RFP or Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") is not required but may be used when practical. Other forms of soliciting competition provided they offer an objective basis upon which to award said contracts, may be utilized upon the prior approval of the Purchasing Manager.

For all professional service agreements greater than \$25,000, an RFP or RFQ is required unless waived by the County Executive or her designee. A waiver may be issued only in the event of a public emergency, as defined under General Municipal Law or the New York State Defense Emergency Act. The County Executive or her designee shall notify the Monroe County Legislature within 90 days of the issuance of any waiver.

All professional service contracts in excess of \$5,000 are subject to approval by the Monroe County Legislature.

5. **Exception for Federal and State Contracts**

This Policy applies to contracts for the procurement of all supplies, services, materials and equipment entered into by the County of Monroe which are not publicly bid. When the procurement involves the expenditure of federal or state funding, the procurement shall be conducted in accordance with any mandatory applicable regulations.

Exceptions to this policy shall only be made upon the approval of the County Attorney.